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M36A

Talking Points for Tim Wirth

Briefing for August 18, 1994

Byrd Amendment (if asked):

- We understand the sentiment behind the amendment and share the concerns reflected therein.
- It is particularly important to recognize that requiring new legislation after October 7 in order to participate in relief actions is very dangerous. We recently had unexpected volcanic activity in Zaire. If another unexpected disaster occurs that requires immediate U.S. assistance occurs after October 7 and Congress is out of session, the legislation would force the United States to wait many weeks or months, even if the disaster cries out for help.
- While we share the desire of the amendment's author to pull out our troops as soon as possible, it is probably too soon in the operation to predict an accurate cut-off date. It would be inadvisable to mandate a specific pull out date without fully evaluating the progress made on the ground and the degree to which troops have been recruited for the expanded UNAMIR operation.
- This operation is unique. The humanitarian suffering in Rwanda is of an unprecedented scale and magnitude. Without U.S. leadership on the relief effort, the suffering would be greater.

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- That said, I do note that the Administration could have reservations about the amendment, including constitutional issues about the authority of the President.
- We will continue to consult with Congress on the status of the U.S. relief operation in the region, the UNAMIR and UNHCR-led operations, and other related issues.
- We note the report language calls for the Administration to insist that the UN should credit U.S. funds made available for humanitarian relief in Rwanda against past assessments of the United States due to the UN.
 - Being voluntary contributions, these funds would not be credited against assessments since, by definition, they were not included in activities financed by UN assessments.
 - An entirely new burden-sharing concept by the UN would be required in order to account for both voluntary efforts by the U.S. and member states as well as the usual assessed contributions.
- There is also overly broad language in the amendment which could be interpreted as prohibiting or restricting AID responses, which may be been unintentional.

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Clearance:AF:KMoody
L/AF:JDonoghue
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IO:BLotis
DRL:JRosenblatt
PRM:MMckelvey
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PM:PSuter

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